

Between Love & Hate

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Chapter 1

Severus was tired.

He lived a comfortable life in a beautiful victorian home in a secluded area just for his family.

Only his family was far too small for his liking.

It was just him and his husband. It was an arranged marriage, one of convenience more than love.

He was living with a man who didn't love him and a house too cold and distant to call a home.

He used to be in love. She had fiery red hair and piercing green eyes. They had known each other since the 4th grade, grew up together and loved each other.

But life had different plans for their love, one that ended only in misery and sadness.

She was killed their senior year in college. Driving home for Christmas sent her poor car skidding off the icy roads and off a cliff.

Severus couldn't bare himself to love again. His heart had a hole the size of his best friend and love of his life.

And nothing could fill it, not even the man he called his husband.

Severus was tired. He was a wildly successful chemist. He was respected in his field and was even granted tenure some time ago.

Chemical engineering was his dream, but his home life was not.

Every day he slept by the warm body of James Potter. He was rich, powerful and a great asset to the Snapes. Hence their marriage.

But now it was nearly 2 years later and they were barely a couple. They didn't even try, well at least james didn't.

He didn't bother to hide the mistresses he brought home when he thought severus would be in late. Of course severus would turn a blind eye, not like he loved him. Still didn't change the fact it sent a sharp pang in his heart.

Severus was tired. And now he was having supper with said husband, picking at the food his cook had worked hard to make.

" lets go out tomorrow." Severus said blankly.

James looked up, spoon mid air from his stew.

" sorry?"

" lets go out tomorrow. Been ages since we've done something together." Severus sipped from his cup of water.

James looked down and stirred his stew.

" sorry. Im busy."

" is it jen this time?" Severus tilted his head.

James' eyes widened and his head snapped up.

" jen?" James acted oblivious. Severus hummed and nodded.

" Jennifer. You're newest toy. Or are you still with Margaret?" Severus rest his elbow on the table.

James looked down in shame and gulped, clearing his throat and reaching for his own cup of water.

James was powerful yes, but he had remarkable patience. He rarely got mad, which severus was thankful for.

It made his life bearable.

" or your new assistant. Kasey? Karen? Whats her name again?"

" kendra." James refused to look him in the eye.

Severus sighed in satisfaction. At least he was admitting it.

" kendra, yes. Lovely girl, although she seems to have trouble getting all her buttons up no?" Severus quirked an eyebrow.

James was getting increasingly nervous, and severus was enjoying it.

" oh come on James. You couldn't have fooled me much longer. Not like i care all that much anyway." Severus stood up and set his utensils down gently.

He walked the length of the table where james was sitting opposite of him and gently put his hand on his right shoulder.

" im going to go compliment the cook. Do think about it yeah?" He pat his shoulder and walked to the kitchens.

James was left shocked and speechless. A shiver went down his spine.

James may be a cheater but he was a good person, and he felt immense remorse.

More than that he felt hurt. His husband didn't care he was having an affair, and it hurt like hell.

James wouldn't admit it ever but he was actually quite fond of severus.

They had been married 2 years and james couldn't help but admire him from afar. It was silly really. They were husbands but james couldn't seem to get any closer than they were 2 years ago.

So he looked from afar. He admired how his hair had grown so much it was practically at his waist.

How his pin straight hair flowed like silk after him when he walked. His elegant arms and gentle touch. The way his hands weaved through ingredients and elements when making one of his concoctions.

Or how he was remarkably tall. They were the same height but Severus towered over most.

He wasn't traditionally beautiful. His hair was flat and his nose was a bit crooked but to James he was radiant.

But he would never admit it. He would never admit that he only slept with those women because the real person he loved seemed to despise him. Because he knew Severus didn't feel the same. And it hurt.

It hurt like hell.

Chapter 2

Severus was shocked. For 2 reasons.

One was when he found a brand new suit waiting for him in his walk in closet and 2, was when there was a knock on the bedroom door and it revealed james with a bouquet of lilies.

" james?" Severus asked confused.

" you said you wanted to go out. So come on. Im taking you to dinner." James said sweetly.

Its been a while since hes gotten treatment from him like this. Severus took the flowers hesitantly, taking a moment for the situation to sink in.

When it did he smiled softly and walked to the dresser with a vase. He set the flowers in them, looking back at james thankfully.

" ill be down in a minute. Mind waiting downstairs?" Severus asked.

James nodded and walked away. His heart was pounding.

He spent the entire day at the office organizing everything so he had the weekend off. He felt bad for making severus go through that.

Even more it hurt that severus barely bat an eye. It oddly made him want to make severus jealous, somehow do something to make james special to him. Enough to actually care if his husband was having an affair or not.

So he waited patiently by the front door. He looked down at his clock ever so often.

He was nervous. He didn't know why, it was his husband after all. The man he'd been married to for almost 2 years.

And yet it was nerve wracking waiting for him to descend the stairs.

So when severus finally walked down the stone steps, dressed in the new suit that james had hand picked for him it felt like his stomach jumped to his throat.

He looked beautiful. But to james severus always looked beautiful.

Severus was wearing the suit, no jacket but with a black vest that complimented the navy detailing nicely.

Gold accents in forms of buttons and tie clips popped out from the dark fabric.

He had an overcoat hanging freely on his shoulders and was wearing his best jewelry. His designer dress shoes clicked against the floor, his hair was down and tucked behind his ear, long gold snakes hung from his ears.

It was enough to make james forget how to breath.

" ready?" Severus said softly.

James snapped out of his trance and nodded, gesturing severus out the door and to the car.

" you look great." James willed himself to say, or else he may forget.

Severus seemed taken back but thankful.

" thank you. Dont look too bad yourself." Severus dusted off the imaginary dust from james' chest and smiled.

James swallowed down. Why was he so nervous?

It was as if they were in a first date which was far from true. But i guess it had been a while.

Almost 10 months since their last date.

James knew it was his fault. He was too busy with work and his....mistresses in all honesty but now he was determined to start trying.

" so where are we going?" Severus asked when they started to drive out of the garage.

" you'll see." James smiled cheekily, one that could make your heart skip a beat in a flash.

And thats exactly what happened. Severus' heart skipped a beat.

Severus felt...comfortable. That was the best way to describe it.

He was sitting in his favorite restaurant, his husband in front of him and looking at the menu he had seen over 100 times.

He had his order memorized by heart.

So when the waiter arrived he had no trouble telling him exactly what he wanted.

" filet mignon. Medium rare please." He handed the waiter his menu.

" ill have the same." James handed him his menu too.

They rarely came here. Mostly because severus still kept his stingy habits and refused to eat here more than once a month.

So it was nice being there, especially with his husband.

" you didn't have work this weekend?" Severus asked softly.

James shook his head and took a sip of water.

" no. I cleared my schedule."

Severus' knotted his brows and quirked his head.

" why?"

" you said you wanted to go out with me. Thought id spend some time with you." He set his glass down.

That was actually...sweet.

" and they dont need you this weekend?"

" kendra and i figured it out. They'll survive 2 days without my guidance." James said smugly.

Severus couldnt help but snort. James was always confident, but his stupidly overconfident personality is what gave him his charm and humor.

" oh please. The only guidance you give is how to work the printer. And i bet kendra does a better job at that anyway." Severus retorted.

He smiled teasingly, pulling james' heart string.

This was nice.

" well what about you? Not sure you can really lecture me on guidance when you can barely stand your colleagues."

" hey! My colleagues are esteemed scholars who just happen to have sticks up their asses 24/7." Severus defended with a playful smile.

James chuckled and raised his hands in defeat.

" all right all right. Cant argue with a Ph.D when all i do is sign paperwork half the time."

" yeah thats right." Severus smiled triumphantly.

They talked a bit more, work, home, miscellaneous stupid things that nobody really knew about except them.

But soon their orders were set down in front of them, and severus' mouth watered.

He loved this place. His mother used to take him here for special occasions.

His uncle used to work the kitchen as head chef so they always came here when there was something to celebrate.

But now both of them were gone, but the food was still the same.

" wow. I get why you love this place so much." James said while practically cleaning his plate already.

Severus laughed and started to dig into his own meal, taking in the exquisite smell wafting from his plate.

They ate without a word. It was standard with them. Severus didn't like talking while eating and honestly he thinks james just forgets to talk.

By the end of the meal both plates were empty and severus was happy.

He set his utensils down the same soft fashion he always did and pat his mouth with a napkin.

He was leaning back on his chair when the waiter came with the check.

James gave him the card and the payment was done so fast severus barely had a second to register that they were already standing up and moving.

"james where are we going?" Severus asked confused, almost tripping over his own two feet.

"you'll see." James said with a wink.

God severus hated his knack for mystery.

"ok i will admit. This is nice."

"see! And you didn't trust me."

"i said its nice not trust worthy. We're well over 80 feet in the air." Severus looked around.

They were sitting on a ferris wheel. Apparently james had seen there was a fair in a nearby park and brought him there.

They walked around for 30 minutes, looking at the lights, james playing some games and even winning severus a little plush.

They got candy and eventually landed here on the ferris wheel.

"you know we're both respectable people in our own fields and we're sitting here on a spinning wheel." Severus complained.

James rolled his eyes. Severus wasn't particularly good with heights. He didnt mind them but any chance he got to not be high up in the air he took.

"severus relax you wont fall down. He have the bar for that." James pat the metal bar that was across them.

"still. I dont like heights." Severus huffed. James snorted and nodded.

"im aware darling." James said looking down with a smile.

Severus' ears perked up. Darling?

They don't use nicknames like that. Never did, never have. So why the change of heart?

Whatever the reason was, severus didn't want to know. He didn't want to ruin the one nice night he's had with his husband since they got married.

But alas curiosity got the best of him.

"so why this?"

"hm?" James looked at him dumbly.

"why'd you take me out tonight?" Severus asked more clearly.

James shrugged, looking up and resting his head back.

"i just wanted to spend some time with you. Is it a crime for a husband to care for his partner?" James asked, turning his head slightly to look at severus.

Severus' heart was racing. He was sure if you came close enough you could hear it drumming against his ribcage.

" i guess not." Severus whispered quietly.

James smiled and took his hand, shocking severus but he didn't fight back.

Instead he allowed their fingers to be intertwined, allowed the back of his hand to be kissed lovingly.

Allowed james to look at him like that.

It hurt. It hurt his chest because it felt like if Severus got used to this, it would hurt him even more.

But severus couldn't help but lean into his touch when james' hand came up to brush some of his hair away.

He let james cup his jaw tenderly and lean into his face until their lips were mere centimeters apart.

Then he let james kiss him. It was soft and gentle, almost as if james was scared severus would break.

Severus closed his eyes, heart in his throat and a million thoughts swirling in his head.

But all too soon james was pulling away although not fully.

His face was still close, so close you could feel his breath against your skin.

He smelt like his signature cologne. Like oak and mint. It was musky and familiar.

Severus loved it.

" we should....prepare to get out. Yeah?" James spoke after a moment.

Severus nodded and smiled, happiness bubbling inside him.

The small brown bear james had wont for him was seated between them, probably getting crushed while that whole ordeal was happening.

They soon descended to the ground, stepping off and severus grabbing the bear.

They walked hand in hand, never letting go and walked back to their car. Even while driving james refused to let go of his hand, and severus refused to let go of the bear.

There wasn't a word spoken while driving. Just comfortable silence.

When they pulled up into their garage and got out of the car, james having to let go whether he liked it or not, james stood in front of severus with a cheeky smile.

" what?" Severus asked with a small smile.

James tapped his cheek with the same mischievous expression he had seen many times.

Severus laughed and rolled his eyes.

" really?"

" come on! No end of the night kiss?"

" we're married james."

" so? Do i get my kiss or not?" James asked, deflecting severus' response.

Severus gave in, saying a small 'fine' and james turning his head so his cheek was facing severus.

But james had been spontaneous all night, so why not severus have the last kiss.

Severus brought his hand up and cupped james' jaw in one hand, straightening his head so it faced forward and leaned in to kiss him.

James was taken back, eliciting a small gasp and severus smiling into the kiss.

James leaned in, deepening it by holding severus by the waist.

This wasn't hard, he didn't have to crouch or kiss at an awkward angle like he usually had to because severus was just as tall as him and they lined up perfectly.

Severus came closer so their bodies were flush against each other and his hands rest on the back of james' neck softly.

Severus finally pulled away, james already missing the warmth of severus against his lips.

" hows that for a goodnight kiss?" Severus asked smugly.

James could barely talk, just smiled at him stupidly and panted.

Severus gave him one more peck, pulling away from james' hold and walked into their house.

" goodnight james." He smiled before walking in without waiting for a response.

James stood there, dumbfounded and panting.

He hadn't been expecting that but fuck.....he really needed to do this more often.

" goodnight.....sev."

Chapter 3

Severus' eyes fluttered open, wincing as the light poured through the curtains.

He yawned and went to stretch his arms when he felt a pair of strong arms around his torso.

He looked down in surprise, seeing tan arms wrapped around his body. He leaned forward a little, turning his head back and seeing shaggy black hair nestled into his shoulders.

James was sound asleep, clinging onto Severus with his face buried into his back.

Severus fell asleep before James came to bed so he didn't even notice James sleeping next to him.

This was new.

James and Severus rarely slept close together, usually sleeping on their respective sides of the bed.

But this was new.

James never cuddled him, Severus wasn't used to it either. But it felt nice being held, that's for sure.

Severus sat up, pulling himself away from James' grasp and standing up from the bed.

He looked down and saw James' sleeping form, the blanket around his waist and his bare torso displayed in the sun.

Severus smiled fondly, petting his hair and kissing his forehead before leaving the room.

He walked down to the kitchen, breakfast already prepared and waiting for him at the kitchen island.

He slid into one of the tall stools and bit into his toast, nursing his cup of tea.

He was halfway done when there was a tired yawn from behind him.

James walked in with just his sweatpants, walking sleepily to the coffee pot.

"mornin." He said while pouring coffee into his favorite mug.

"morning. Why aren't you wearing a shirt?" Severus asked.

He himself was wearing a black t-shirt and black sweatpants like normal, his hair in a low ponytail at the nape of his neck.

"didn't feel like it." James shrugged.

Severus huffed a chuckle and shook his head. He continued to eat, James sliding onto the stool next to him with his own plate of food.

"so. What do you wanna do today?" James asked.

Severus looked at him and shrugged.

"don't know. You're not busy?"

" i told you i cleared my schedule didn't i?"

Severus swallowed and nodded, looking back at his plate and picking at his eggs.

" im having lunch with Remus today."

" remus?"

" Sirius' husband. You know hes in the psych department. He works with clinical lycanthropy."

" isnt that the disease where people think they can turn into animals?"

" yeah. Specifically wolves. He used to have it as a child. Now he helps other people deal with it."

" hm. Thats nice of him."

" it is. Dont you work with Sirius?"

" I've met him a couple times at the office. Hes in a different department so i dont see him often."

Severus nodded and finished up his plate. He stood up to put it in the sink, james standing up to put his mug in.

" how about we meet up after lunch? Ill take you to a cafe." James leaned his hand against the counter.

" a cafe? Really?"

" its a cat cafe."

Severus immediately brightened. If it was one thing he loved, it was cats.

" deal. Ill see you at 2 how about that?" Severus smiled.

James returned it and nodded.

" great. Ill see you the-" james didn't finish his sentence.

His phone buzzed from his pocket and he looked at the screen.

" who is it?" Severus asked.

" uhh i dont recognize this number." James' face twisted in confusion.

" go ahead pick it up. It might be important." Severus said casually and sat down to his cup of tea.

James hesitated before picking it up and putting it to his ear.

" hello?"

" james."

James paled. He hadn't been expecting her.

" jen?" The name slipped from his mouth before he could stop it.

Severus' head snapped up. He froze as their eyes met, cold black eyes stared into warm hazel ones.

James couldn't move. He fucked up. He really fucked up. He should NOT have picked up the damn phone.

"jen?" Severus whispered, voice wavering. There was a flash of hurt in his eyes.

The morning had been going so well. Yesterday went so well. But now the facade all came crashing down.

Severus stood up and left the room in a hurry. It felt like he was hyperventilating. He couldn't believe he let himself think like that.

Think that james changed.

He hurried to his room, getting changed and determined to not see james until his heart stopped hurting.

He changed in a flash. He threw on a charcoal grey hoodie, black ripped jeans and white sneakers.

Severus always looked put together but it was Saturday and severus really needed to get out of the house.

He snatched his keys, wallet and phone off his bedside table and ran out of the room, grabbing a black cap before slamming the door shut.

He raced down the stairs, ignoring the look of worry from some of the maids doing rounds.

"sev wait!" James grabbed his arm before he could argue.

Severus looked back, trying to look as composed as possible.

"she asked you to come didn't she?" Severus said calmly, surprising even himself with how he was able to pull that off.

"go." He simply commanded and yanked his arm out of his grasp, practically running out the main entrance and to his car.

He didn't stay to see the hurt in james' eyes as his husband ran away from him.

His arm fell to his side.

He was determined to end this. Today and for all.

"THIS is what you called me for?!" James yelled angrily.

He was standing in the middle of a hotel suite and Jen was standing in front of him with a towel wrapped around herself.

"come on James. I cant afford to pay for it all." She whined.

"you called me because you rented a hotel suite and you cant afford to pay for it? are you serious?" He was trying to stay calm.

His blood was boiling and he was scared out of his mind that severus was hurt. Which he knew he was.

" come on babe~" she brought her hand up to his biceps and he yanked away from her grasp, stepping back and pinching the bridge of his nose.

" no jen. Im done. Im absolutely done."

" you say that everytime and you always come back."

" no this time it's actually over. Im done. Bye Jen." He spat her name and walked past her.

" wait james!" She grabbed onto his arm desperately.

" james no dont go." She begged.

James hated this. He absolutely hated this.

" let go." He said between gritted teeth.

" come on baby. We've had so many fun times. Come on stay" she pulled onto him.

He looked away, he was determined to end this no matter what.

" im married."

" so? Thats never stopped you before."

" jen no. Get away from me." James removed himself from her.

" if you leave ill tell him everything!" She screamed when he opened the door.

James stopped. He let go of the handle and let it close.

" what?"

" ill tell him you cheated on him. That you've been cheating on him for as long as you've been married." She said with malice in her voice.

James scoffed. She was THAT desperate?

" go ahead. He already knows." He swung the door again.

" IM PREGNANT!" She screamed. No, screeched.

James was starting to get pissed. His blood was boiling and he felt like he was gonna explode from all the anger.

He stepped back into the room and slammed the door, the side table next to it shaking as it closed.

Jen flinched, stepping back as james stepped closer to her.

" no you're not."

" y-yes i am." She stuttered, confidence leaving her voice.

" you're fucking crazy if you think that will work on me. Get away from me. Dont come near me or my husband, delete my number. Never call me. If you really are pregnant it's probably from one of your other boyfriends. Leave me alone. Bye jen." He spat angrily and stormed off.

The door slammed behind him for the second time and he angrily walked down the stairs, not willing to wait for the elevator.

He left the hotel in a fury.

He pulled out his phone and dialed a number he didn't think he would need today.

"hello?"

"hey. Its James Potter. I need the address of the restaurant your husband took my husband to lunch."

James drummed his steering wheel anxiously. He was shaking, mostly from anger but fear was starting to trickle in.

He had dealt with jen and her crazy bat shit actions before but this was too far.

Now it was all over. He had driven to the restaurant sirius texted him furiously. He was almost scared he would crash his car but he just wanted to see severus.

He snapped out of his thoughts when the car door opened beside him. Severus slid into the seat next to him, silently pulling the seatbelt across his body and sighing.

"i thought you went to see jen."

James gulped. Severus had no emotion in his voice or his face. He was wearing a black cap and casual clothes.

It was a change from what he usually looked like.

"i did." He was breathing nervously and looked forward.

"hm. Figured. So what are you doing here?" Severus said blankly.

James was extremely anxious. He needed to calm down. His emotions were astray and he was ready to jump off a cliff.

"i promised to take you to the cafe, didn't i?" He said softly.

Severus was conflicted. He was hurt. Really hurt. He was so angry at james and himself for allowing himself to believe that much.

But on the other hand....he really liked cats.

"fine."

Severus wont lie. He was feeling better.

There was an orange fluffy Maine coon in his lap and a cup of hot cocoa on the table in front of him.

Only bad thing was james anxiously tapping his foot across the table.

" you like him?" James asked.

His voice gave away his nervousness almost immediately. Severus' walls were up and James paled in comparison to his put together attitude.

" yes. You know i like all cats."

" yeah. I know." James smiled.

Severus pet the cat, the orange fluff nudging his head deeper into his touch.

" I ended it with jen." James said finally.

Severus stiffened.

" got bored?"

" no sev." James exasperated. This was gonna be harder than he expected.

The cat cafe was set up so that there was a private business area where you could bring the cats to.

It was secluded from the rest of the cafe and from the looks of it it looked sound proof.

" no i ended it for good. There is no one else."

Severus scoffed, breaking James' heart.

" what happened? Did you realise shes crazy or something?" He smiled in disbelief. It was almost mocking.

" yeah actually. She is. But thats not why i ended it."

" oh please. What did she do? Did she spend too much money?"

" no she claimed she was pregnant when i tried to break up with her."

Severus was surprised.

" what?"

" yeah. And she also threatened to tell you everything but....you already know and apparently the next best thing was faking a pregnancy so." James shrugged.

Hes been having a rough day. Everything about today was messed up. Nothing went to schedule. Well except for the cat cafe maybe.

" but you had a vasectomy."

" i know! But apparently she didn't know and thought it would work." James held his head in his hands.

Severus swallowed. He wasn't expecting that.

" well. Nonetheless. Im sure you'll get a new girlfriend soon enough."

" sev please stop. Im done. No more girlfriends, no mistresses, no hookups. I know i messed up. Ive been messing up since we got married and i am so sorry. But im willing to- no. Im going to try

from now on. Ill be a better husband. One you can actually be proud of."

Severus held his cup in his hand and drank it slowly.

" james im always proud to call you my husband."

James looked up in surprise.

" you're fair. Your handsome, your obviously the ladies man. Your patient even when you dont need to be and even if you dont love me, you treat me well."

No. James wanted to say. I do love you. I dont deserve you, all of it. But he couldn't.

" it just hurts to see you act so carelessly. I dont want you to get hurt. Or ruin your reputation." Severus set the now empty cup down.

He let the cat slink off his lap and sit to his side. He pet its head and sighed.

" but if what you say is true. And you want to be a better husband. You want to try, then ill try too." He looked up at james.

James saw something like determination and hesitation in his eyes.

" lets see how we do. Shall we?" Severus stood up and gestured to the door before walking out.

James stood up swiftly, following him to the entrance and out the establishment.

" lets go home. Im tired." Was all severus said before sitting in the car.

James nodded and sat in it too.

" yeah....lets go home."

Chapter 4

Severus stared at the piece of card stock in front of him.

It was a business card, from a former.....boyfriend per se.

He was a fling that lasted too long to count as a one night stand from way back in freshman year of college. It was before he and Lily had started dating. Before he fell hopelessly in love with her.

But I guess he counted nonetheless.

He had completed his Ph.D and was starting a job at the laboratory Severus worked at.

Remus and Severus ran into him during their lunch and he happened to give Severus his business card.

Dr. Lucius A. Malfoy Ph.D

The bold black letters read on the clean off white paper.

Below the name was his number, an odd little heart beside it.

Before they made the mistake of sleeping together, they were good friends. They met in high-school, when Lily and Severus were new and he offered to show them around.

He heard he got married a couple months ago, to a lovely girl.

Narcissa Black. She was beautiful and smart. Her father was rich and powerful and so in turn so was she.

" what are you doing?"

Severus flinched, sighing in relief when he saw James stand over him.

" Jesus James. You scared the life out of me."

" I'm sorry. You were sitting here for a while so I wanted to know if you were ok." James set his hands on Severus' shoulders.

He rubbed between his shoulder blades lovingly. Severus will admit, it made him feel better.

" I'm fine. It's just a business card someone gave me. I used to know them from highschool."

" really?" James took the business card when Severus offered it.

" Lucius Malfoy? Isn't he married to Narcissa Black?"

" yeah why?"

" hm. Nothing just that she's pretty famous." He set the card down and leaned against the chair.

" anyway. Dinner's ready." He pat his shoulder to indicate for him to stand up.

Severus complied, standing up and following him down for dinner.

Dinner was good as always. Their cook was really talented and they've had him forever.

Like normal they ate in silence, only for whatever reason james decided he wanted to sit right next to severus.

Usually they sat on opposite ends of the long table but now james was sitting next to him along the side of the table.

"james? Why are you sitting here?" Severus asked.

James just shrugged and continued to eat silently.

Severus looked at him skeptically but decided to drop it.

This has been going on for days. Random bursts of affection, james taking any opportunity to be closer to severus but not so close he felt uncomfortable.

Little kisses to the side of the head, holding hands all of a sudden.

He has even woken up to james wrapped around him more than once, actually almost every morning which just confused him more.

It was so subtle, but it all hit severus like a train.

It started with james sitting next to him for dinner, progressed to holding hands when walking down the street.

Even went as far as pecks on the lips when leaving.

It was driving severus crazy because every time he brought it up, james just shrugged.

"argh." Severus groaned as he laid his head on the table.

"woah. You good?"

Lucius was leaning against the doorframe with lunch in his hands.

Severus reluctantly picked his head off the table and groaned again.

"oh. Right. Forgot you were coming." He sat up and lucius chuckled.

He had decided to call him out to lunch, to get him used to the university. Or at least that's what he told himself.

Really he just wanted to see how he was.

That was a couple weeks ago and now lucius was always around severus.

"that's how you treat a friend?"

"shut up. I'm tired. Just don't touch anything in my lab."

"what? Why?"

"half the chemicals I work with can burn your skin off, I hardly believe Narcissa would want to be

married to you if you have no skin." Severus responded.

Lucius scoffed with a smile.

" wow. Charming." Lucius said sarcastically.

Severus just mocked his face and continued to stare off into space.

" so. Whats got your head spinning circles?" Lucius took out his lunch and started to eat.

" just my husband and his stupid actions."

" what did he do?"

" that's exactly it. NOTHING. He did NOTHING WRONG. Hes sweet, hes kind, hes affectionate."

" oh yeah sounds like a monster."

" shut up."

Lucius snickered and shook his head.

Severus was about ready to drop the subject and move on. Maybe he was just being paranoid.

That was until a knock to his door furthered his confusion.

" Hey sev. Are you free-? Oh im sorry. I wasn't aware you had company." James' head popped out from the doorway.

Severus and lucius shared a look. Lucius looked a little hostile for whatever reason but severus brushed it off.

" yeah no its fine. He was just leaving." Severus said quickly.

Lucius looked at him with a weird look and severus just mouthed ' sorry.'

Lucius groaned and picked up his lunch, walking past james a little angry.

" is he ok? Was I interrupting something important?" James asked, pointing to where lucius had just left.

" uh no. He just likes to eat his lunches here sometimes. Anyway, what are you doing here? Why arent you at work?" Severus stood up.

James smiled and put his hands in his pockets.

" i wanted to take you to lunch." He grinned wildly.

" why?"

" what do you mean why? I missed you. Now come on, grab your coat lets go."

James hooked his elbow onto severus' and started to pull away.

" missed me-?" Severus whispered and grabbed his coat, barely enough time to take it off the hook before being dragged to god knows where james was taking him.

" james this is not lunch." Severus sighed.

For whatever reason he was standing outside of somewhere with a blindfold on. It was very strange.

" no but it is something."

" you said you're taking me to lunch."

" well its better than lunch."

" really? Its better than french fries because i highly doubt it."

" fine fine ill get you french fries when we're done. Happy?"

" at least i get fries." Severus huffed.

He shuffled in place, anxious at what james was planning.

Then he heard a door open, a woman talking to james and james thanking her profusely.

When the interaction was over he felt james' warmth settle in front of him, but far away enough he couldn't touch him.

" ok. You can take it off." James said with excitement in his voice.

Severus exhaled and took it off, not really expecting much but when he saw the pet carrier in james' hand he almost choked on air.

" james what is that?" He pointed to it. He knew what it was he just didn't want to get his hopes up.

" what do you mean what is it? Its a cat." James responded, holding up the carrier so you could see inside.

" you got me a cat?" Severus asked.

" you said you'd take me out to lunch and you got me a CAT?" Severus said in disbelief.

James nodded dumbly and looked into the carrier to see the cat.

Severus' brain was short circuiting.

" you got me a cat? Without consulting me?"

James set the cat down and looked at him a little nervous.

" sorry yeah I probably should have. If you don't want the cat we can find it a new home-"

" what? Fuck no, thats my cat." Severus took the carrier from him and eyed him up and down.

James bit back the urge to burst out laughing and closed his eyes with a smirk on his face.

" well. Glad you like him. Hes the cat you met at the cat cafe."

" jupiter?" Severus said wide eyed.

" you named him already?" James chuckled.

Severus stammered and looked around before waving him off and instead opting to talk to the cat.

He had his back turned so james walked to him and gently pushed the small of his back.

" lets go. I promised you lunch."

" no you promised me french fries." Severus clutched the pet carrier and continued to play with the cat through the little bars.

" fine fine. Ill get you french fries. Happy?"

Severus looked at him and smiled wide. James felt like his heart was melting right then and there.

" very."

Yep. James' heart was now a puddle.

Chapter 5

This was bad. This was getting out of hand.

Severus was panicking a little, unsure of what to do.

He often found himself with their new cat in his office or study. Sometimes he would walk out into the garden he so rarely visited but was kept in pristine condition thanks to the lovely gardeners.

Or he would be at work, having lunch with Lucius and Remus, trying to figure out the agenda for tomorrow.

And if he was doing none of that, all the rest of his time was used up by James.

Whether James took him someplace new or someplace old they often went to, he always made a night of it.

And now there he was, sitting in his living room reading a book with his cat in his lap, and his husband on his side.

James wasn't reading a book. He was watching a movie on his computer and had at least the courtesy to put on headphones which Severus appreciated.

But still the flashing lights and interesting scenery was enough to steer his attention from his book onto the screen of James' computer. He found himself looking over James' shoulder to get a glance, or a small gasp escaping from his mouth.

James had a habit of watching everything with subtitles on so it wasn't hard to follow along.

It was when James looked up to see Severus' book abandoned and he himself engrossed in the movie did his face break out into a grin.

Severus quickly looked away and cleared his throat before standing up and leaving the room.

Jupiter trailing behind him like always.

James chuckled and shook his head, attention back on his movie.

"moony i dont know what to do." Severus exasperated. Remus cringed and shook his head.

"please dont call me moony."

"what do i do moony?" Severus ignored the glare and looked at him expectantly.

"it was like one time, stop calling me moony."

"why are we calling Dr.Lupin moony?" A historian named Arthur Weasley asked.

"hello arthur." Remus said softly.

"hello moony." He replied.

"oh god its spread." Lupin grimaced.severus laughed and greeted arthur the same.

" so why are we calling lupin moony?" Arthur asked, taking out his lunch and eating it.

" one of his patients called him Moony for almost 3 hours straight. So we thought we'd make it a nickname. Has a nice ring to it no?" Severus explained.

Arthur laughed and agreed, chuckling along as remus suffered from the nickname.

" ahem." Someone cleared his throat loudly next to severus.

He looked up and saw platinum hair, smiling unconsciously at the sight of his friend.

" Severus can i speak to you?" Lucius drawled in a monotone voice.

Remus gave him a skeptical look but urged severus to go when he asked if it was ok.

Severus had a bad habit of constantly asking for permission, even if not needed and remus knew that.

But remus watched lucius drag severus away to a nearby corner and he watched worriedly at what they might be saying.

" what is it?" Severus asked lucius.

Lucius sighed and looked down.

" i dont want you to hang around them."

" excuse me?" Severus raised his eyebrows and crossed his arms.

" dont hang around them! It'll ruin our reputation."

" OUR reputation? Im sorry lucius but we dont have a reputation. I have one and you've hardly been here long enough to get one." Severus defended. He may be overly polite but he wasnt a push over.

" im just saying. They're loons. One works with people who think they are wolves and the other spends all their time writing in his office." Lucius sneered.

Severus scoffed and smiled sarcastically.

" well they are my friends, and if you want to continue to be mine as well then i suggest you rid of the prissy attitude and calm down. This isnt highschool lucius. You dont cherry pick your friends." Severus spat and turned around to leave.

" what would lily say?" Lucius said suddenly.

Severus froze. He slowly turned around with fury in his eyes.

" lily would say they were lovely people lucius. And she is gone so there is no point dwelling in the past. And dont dare speak of her like that, do not use her name against me." Severus sighed and walked back to his table.

He was calm like always. Thats what he always was, calm and collected. Until it came to remus in which he was almost always distressed about james.

" what did he want?" Remus asked.

Severus shook his head and made a vague hand gesture.

" dont know. He was spouting none sense. Dont worry about it moony."

" ok no! No moony! It was a one time thing!" Remus cried in frustration.

Severus and arthur bit back the burst of laughter threatening to spills

" fine. We wont call you moony...."

" moony." Severus finished the sentence arthur had started.

They started snickering and thats when a cloth napkin made contact with Severus' face and arthur lost it.

Severus looked at remus with a bewildered smile, Remus looking quite smug.

" how dare you." Severus couldn't stop the chuckle from trickling into his words.

" you deserved it." Was the response he got from remus before he went back to his food like nothing happened.

Severus threw a grape at him, earning a surprised gasp and a glare.

Severus just shrugged and continued to eat with a smirk on his face.

" sev where do you keep the cat food?" James asked over the phone.

He had been looking for almost half an hour and he couldn't find it anywhere.

" what cat food?"

" you know, the food our cat eats?"

" why? is the chef gone?"

" chef? Why would i need the chef? You're not gonna be here for dinner so i thought we'd just order take out when u get home late."

" well the cat eats food the chef cooks."

James sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose and trying not to laugh at severus' completely serious statement.

" im sorry. The cat eats the food the chef makes?"

" yes. I ask him to prepare fresh food for him."

" severus honey, why is that necessary?"

" im sorry you dont care for our cats health as much as i do but i for one would like out cat to not be obese."

" and cooking him special food is the way to do so?"

".....yes."

James pursed his lips and nodded.

" well the chef is gone and we dont have cat food. Jupiter is getting antsy."

Severus huffed after a moment of silence.

" fine ill pick up cat food on the way home. Ill be there in an hour."

" thank you. Goodbye love."

" goodbye james."

Severus hung up first, leaving james to dwell on his thoughts. Severus didn't call him sweet names like that but james wasn't complaining.

At least he wasnt so bewildered when james did it anymore.

He bent down to pet jupiter who had been circling his legs like a shark.

" sorry jupiter. It'll be an hour." He pet his head softly.

Jupiter nudged his head into his hand, a motion he does a lot and let out a small purr.

He took that as a sign that Jupiter was willing to wait the hour.

He stood up and walked back up to his room to change.

He didn't have time to change out of the clothes he wore to the office before he was bombarded by the cat meowing.

He took off his dress clothes and took out a plain t shirt and sweatpants before opting to take a shower before changing.

When he was finally done, he came out in casual clothes and a towel over his head.

He must have been there for a long time because when he came out the sun had already set and the light started to die out.

He ruffled his hair with the towel and walked downstairs to wait for severus to come home, and maybe keep jupiter company.

He was about to walk into the living room when he heard the doorbell ring.

Thinking it was severus he swung it open with a smile on his face.

Who he saw was not his husband.

" hello." James said confused.

" hello. Mind if we talk for a bit?"

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Severus was finally starting to head home. He took an extra 20 minutes trying to finish his lab report and took another 15 trying to pick out the best cat food he could find.

Now he was driving home with 2 bags of cat food beside him and about 2 stacks of paperwork.

He just wanted to get home and sleep. Maybe he should call James first.

" mind if we talk?"

James looked him up and down. He was trying to pin point where he'd seen him before.

" uh Lucius Malfoy? Right?" He pointed at him.

Lucius looked at the finger that was sticking out at him and sighed with distaste.

" yes. We met at Severus' lab."

Ohhhh. That's where he'd seen him from.

" right. Sorry. Um hi I'm James." He stuck out his hand.

Lucius took it and shook it reluctantly.

James was confused why he was being a little hostile. He had come to HIS home unannounced and now he was the one being weird?

He was about to invite Lucius in but his phone started to buzz.

" uh sorry I have to take this really quickly."

Lucius sighed irritably and nodded.

James picked up the phone, looking to the side.

" sev?"

" hey James. I'm almost home."

" did you get the cat food?"

" yes I got the cat food don't worry. I just wanted to check in and see if you ordered the food yet."

" not yet. Should I?"

" could you? I kinda had a hard day at the lab. First this fucking report and also this weird thing with Lucius I don't know."

James nodded and glanced at Lucius who was looking around.

" yeah about that.....um ill see you home yeah?"

" great. Bye james."

" bye love." James ended.

He put the phone back and apologized to lucius before straightening up and smiling hesitantly.

" was that sev-"

" what did you want to talk about?" James cut him off.

Lucius huffed and shifted.

" i wanted to talk to you about Severus actually. May i come in?"

" uh actually me and severus are gonna go out soon so um. Im afraid i cant let you in. Plus the house is a mess." He laughed nervously.

He had a feeling he shouldnt let him in so he was trying to hide the fact by smiling warmly.

" but im sure we can just talk out here." James said.

Lucius nodded and looked at him skeptically.

" alright then. I am concerned for Severus."

" why? Is something wrong at work?"

" its just the people he hangs out with."

" are they hurting him?"

" no. But its hurting his reputation. What would people say if they saw severus, an astounding scientist with a bunch of fakes."

" fakes?"

" fake scientists. Their jobs are minuscule and i dont think hey should be hanging out with severus at their level of work."

James closed his eyes and knotted his brows.

" im sorry. Are you by any chance talking about Remus Lupin?"

" yes. He is one of them."

" the doctor who is the leading scientist is finding a cure for clinical lycanthropy?"

" yes."

James didn't understand how lucius was not getting it.

So instead of the confused face he had on, he replaced it with a wry smile.

" thank you for your concern but it is none of my business. And frankly its none of yours so we should probably stay out of it."

" and you would just allow your husband to be around those people? Do you not care for him at all?" Lucius pushed his buttons.

James was about to shut the door when he said that.

James pried the door open and stared at Lucius with a condescending smile.

" actually i do. Much more than you think. And i dont have a say in who he gets to hang out with, i trust him and his better judgment."

" it just baffles me that a spouse would care so little for their husband's reputation-"

" and what about narcissa?"

" excuse me?" Lucius raised an eyebrow.

" what would she say about you coming unannounced at some mans house you knew from what? 10 years ago? Wasnt it just a couple weeks ago you made friends again. What would she think when she finds out you've been more focused on your supposed high school friends social life more than your own marriage?" James said blankly.

A slow snarl appeared on Lucius' face.

" says you. Ive heard about your mistresses, your girlfriends. I think Severus would be very distraught to find out about them."

" he already knows and i have been trying harder as a husband. Now if you will excuse me, my husband will be home and i need to get dinner delivered. Goodbye."

And James shut the door.

He dragged a long sigh, closing his eyes and leaning against the door. He heard a car drive off, probably Lucius' and finally picked up his phone again.

" hello. Id like to place an order for delivery please."

Severus walked into the house quietly. He called out for James but all who came was Jupiter bouncing off the stairs at the sight of food

Severus laughed and pet his cat before heading to the kitchen to prepare the food.

He poured it onto a plate, setting it down on the floor and also filling his water bowl.

He set down the things on the counter and finally took off his coat, roaming around in search of James.

He entered the dining room and saw take out sitting on the table, enough for two. It was from his favorite chinese restaurant and he smiled fondly at how James remembered his favorite dish.

He left the takeout, still no sign of James.

Thats when he entered the living room. James was sprawled out on the couch with his arm resting on his abdomen.

He must've fallen asleep. Severus did take longer than expected. Traffic had been abnormally bad tonight.

He walked over to James and knelt down next to him.

He was about to wake him up but got caught up in staring at him. He looked so peaceful, and Severus smiled unconsciously.

He wiped a strand of hair off from his face and caressed his arm.

He leaned over him, leaving a small peck on his forehead before starting to shake his arm.

"James." He said softly.

His eyes fluttered open, still half closed and he smiled when he saw Severus.

"You're home." He sat up, grunting while doing so.

"Yeah, sorry traffic was bad."

"No no it's fine. Did you eat?"

"No. Did you?" Severus asked.

James shook his head and rubbed at his eyes.

"No. I wanted to wait for you to come. I must've fallen asleep." He yawned.

Severus smiled and nodded standing up and bringing his hand up.

"Come on let's eat. I already fed Jupiter and he seems to like the food so." Severus shrugged.

James nodded, standing up and ignoring Severus' hand, opting to hug him from behind instead.

"Missed you." He whispered.

Severus felt his heart quicken and he gulped.

"Missed you too. Come on let's eat."

Chapter End Notes

Lmao Lucius was kinda giving me Sheldon Cooper vibes ngl.

Chapter 7

It had been a few days since lucius came to the house, and everyday it felt like he was sticking to severus more.

Severus brushed it off, telling him hes new and just trying to rekindle their friendship.

Of course james didn't believe it. He was oddly controlling just to be a "friend."

James didn't tell him lucius came either. He didn't want to worry him and possibly ruin their relationship.

But this was getting out of hand.

" james. You know lucius."severus introduced them as he walked into their house.

James froze and looked at severus then at lucius. Lucius had a smile on his face, it was blank, just ... a smile.

James nodded and shook his hand.

" of course. Lucius. Nice to see you again." He said as politely as he could.

Severus smiled and came up to james.

" ill be ready in a sec." he whispered and went upstairs.

They were supposed to go to a fundraiser for severus' university. He hadn't expected lucius to join them, looking very sharp.

" uh lucius. Where is your wife?"

" sick. She couldn't make it. She had the flu." Lucius said almost automatically. Like he had rehearsed it.

" oh no. Is she ok?" James persevered.

" yeah. She'll be fine. Just needs some rest thats all."

James nodded and tried to make small talk with him.

He was dressed in a navy suit with a black waistcoat and a white dress shirt.

He wanted to look nice, and he knew severus would look nice because he always looked put together, even while going to work.

He had a closet full of hand tailored suits from multiple designer brands and such so severus was always prepared.

Although severus did pick out james' suit and told him he ABSOLUTELY needed to wear it, which was odd.

But it was for severus' workplace so he did as told and wore the suit he was instructed.

Lucius was wearing a clean all black suit, his platinum hair sticking out more against the dark

fabric.

James didn't like him. But he did look good.

" alright im here. Lets go." Severus ran down the stairs and hooked his arm with james'.

He was wearing a large overcoat, making james question why but he didn't pry.

" shall we?"

James was about 2 drinks in and very much curious.

Severus still hadn't taken off the coat, just stood there with it on the entire time they were there.

He had offered to take it, but severus just said no.

Eventually the curiosity got the best of him.

" ok seriously what are you hiding under there?" James came up behind severus and whispered.

Severus sighed and turned around.

" do you really want to know?"

" yes! Its been eating me alive. Whyd you ask me to wear this suit, why are you wearing a coat, why was lucius with you, its all very confusing." James said quickly.

Severus rolled his eyes and brought up a finger telling him to wait.

He took off the coat button by button and eventually the whole thing came undone.

He took off the coat, james taking it in his arm.

He was wearing a suit that matched james perfectly. Almost like the inverted version.

It was a dark charcoal grey suit that almost looked black paired with a navy waistcoat and a black dress shirt.

He had no tie but there was a gold chain hanging from his vest and every detail matched each other.

From the shiny gold buttons to even the little navy pocket square in his suit jacket pocket.

James stared at severus who had his hands in his pockets and smiled casually.

" i wanted us to match." He shrugged.

James pursed his lips so he didn't immediately break into a smile or do something like gasp.

Severus saw this and sighed.

" you can smile." He threw his hand up.

James tried contain it. Tried to and failed.

He broke out into a large smile and leaned in, kissing severus' cheek and standing close to him.

" you look very handsome."

" why thank you. You do too."

" well of course i do, you picked it out." James returned the compliment.

Severus smiled proudly and turned his head.

" yeah you're right." He said smugly.

James laughed and kissed him on his temple again.

" hey one question."

" yeah?" Severus said as he took a champagne flute from one of the tables.

" why was lucius with you today at the house?"

Severus looked at him and shrugged.

" he asked if we wanted to go together. Why?" He took a sip from his glass.

" oh nothing. Just wondering." James answered.

Severus nodded and moved on, a couple of his coworkers coming to talk to them.

One of whom was Remus lupin. Him and his husband came to say hello, sirius and james talking about some silly game and remus as well as severus watching them lovingly.

It was overall a good night. A lot of compliments regarding james and severus' matching outfits.

Eventually into the night severus got too hot and ended up handing james his jacket, james holding it happily as he followed him around and was introduced to his colleagues.

Half the things they discussed james couldn't understand. Science was never his forte, he was much better at gym class or History.

But nonetheless he listened. For the most part. He stayed sober because he was driving and watched severus down about 6 flutes in an hour.

Severus had a very high alcohol tolerance. James did not so he only allowed himself to drink 2 glasses.

Still being drunk would have helped the boredom but he was still listening, all because it was severus talking.

He just nodded slightly and tried not to yawn.

At the end of the night, the fundraiser was a success. Or so james heard.

He wasn't paying much attention, only just looking at severus or maybe the food.

So when severus asked him to go home, he was very happy to oblige.

They were walking to the car when severus said he forgot something, a file about a report or

something to tell his coworker maybe.

Severus was a little buzzed so he just mumbled something before running off into the banquet hall again.

" enjoyed the party?"

James whipped around and his mood immediately dropped.

Lucius was standing there leaning against a wall and looking at James with a weird sort of smile on his face.

" yeah. Me and Sev are just gonna go home now."

" you know its all a play right?"

James was taken back.

" excuse me?"

" all that affection. Matching suits, holding hands. Its all a show." Lucius explained further, walking closer with each word.

" hes just using you. After all, didn't you only marry so his family wouldn't go bankrupt?"

James felt his blood boil. What is with this dude? And he called himself a friend.

" i-"

" ive been there. Did he tell you we used to date?" Lucius tilted his head condescendingly.

James gulped. He had not known that but he was determined not to let him get under his skin.

" he used me just like he's using you. He dated me for my money, dumped me and went onto the next. Only the next stayed for a while." Lucius looked down.

" he'll never love you like he loved her. He'll never love anyone like he loved her."

Lucius leaned in really close, so close James could feel his breath against his neck.

" to him.....you're just a product of convenience. We both were." Lucius pulled back, looking at him with an evil smirk.

He had an eyebrow raised and drank from the glass of scotch James didn't realize he was holding.

" are you drunk?"

That was the only explanation for what he was spewing. It couldn't be true. James wouldn't accept that to be the truth.

So the only reason was that Lucius Malfoy.....was drunk.

" nope. This is my first glass." Lucius raised his hand that was clutching the cup.

James tried to ignore the ugly feeling settling in his stomach, or the sharp pangs of pain he felt in his chest.

He looked down and was about to say something when he felt a soft touch on his waist.

" ready to go?" Severus asked.

He looked forward and saw lucius, smiling at him tiredly.

" oh hey lucius. Where've you been all night?"

" just around. You going home?"

" yeah im pretty spent. Looks like tonight was a success though. Im guessing we'll have some pretty cool new equipment to work with soon."

Lucius laughed and nodded.

" well then. Goodnight sev."

" night lucius." Severus said and nudged james to go.

When passing, lucius whispered in james ear again.

" think about it."

James gulped and ignored the shiver down his spine.

" james you ok?" Severus asked worriedly.

James just gave him a wry smile and nodded.

" mhm. Im ok."

Severus smiled and continued to walk. It looks like he bought it.

" finally we're home. Im gonna go to bed. You coming?" Severus sighed when they finally entered through the front door.

James nodded but didn't move from where he was planted.

" james? You ok?" Severus asked again, worry in his voice.

" uhm yeah. Im fine. Actually i have to go to the office tonight. Sorry i forgot." He said, his eyes darted from severus to the ground.

Severus looked at him and nodded.

" oh. Ok yeah sure. You've been taking a lot of time off. All that work must've caught up to you huh?" He smiled.

James nodded and let a nervous chuckle leave through his nose.

" yeah. I guess so. Um im gonna leave now then." James pointed to the door with his thumb and went to take his leave.

" wait." Severus grabbed his arm and turned him around, leaving a small goodbye kiss on his lips.

" dont sleep too late." Severus whispered.

James' heart was pounding, for 2 reason that he would never understand.

He swallowed hard and forced himself to smile.

" yeah. Of course. Bye." He said softly and ran out the door, leaving severus alone.

Severus was worried, but to be fair he was usually always worried when it came to james.

He just hoped he didn't do something stupid

Chapter 8

James couldn't get it out of his head.

The maybe 2 minute long conversation bore into his mind like a nail and it wouldn't leave.

The uncertainty in James scared him. He trusted Severus, of course he did but he will not lie, Malfoy's words had a huge impact on him.

Whether it was fear or anger, he couldn't tell the difference. All he knew was that he had been avoiding Severus ever since that night, and he was holed up in his office drowning himself with work.

Severus was also worried. James hadn't been home lately.

It was always the excuse 'gotta go to the office' which Severus had heard multiple times before.

It wasn't new to him, and it wasn't new that James was avoiding him like he did when he knew he did something wrong.

So you couldn't really blame him when his mind started to worry.

"Sev you've been spaced out all day. Are you ok?" Lucius asked.

Severus looked at him with a blank look and nodded. Lucius was always around Severus, maybe because they worked in the same department or maybe because he was worried, Severus didn't know.

All he knew was that something was happening with his husband and Lucius was his closest friend right now.

"Yeah. I'm fine it's just James. He's worrying me." Severus explained.

"Oh? What's happening?" Lucius asked, still focused on his task.

Severus sighed and hesitated. He didn't know if he should tell Lucius but at the same time who else would he tell?

"He's just been home late that's all. He's been spending a lot of time at his office and I'm just worried he's overworking himself."

"Are you sure all he's doing is working?" Lucius added.

Severus looked at him with wide eyes.

"Why do you say that?"

It was outrageous what he was insinuating.

"I'm just saying. He has a track record and old habits die hard."

Severus scoffed. James wouldn't do that. Would he? No no. James changed, he's changed!

He's loving and he's considerate now. For God's sake he got him a cat and takes him out regularly,

he hasn't gone back.

" no. Thats far fetched. James wouldn't do that. Not anymore."

" are you sure? Doesn't he have an assistant?"

" kendra? No she wouldn't do that. Nor would james fall for it. I trust him."

" thats what you did last time and he cheated on you what, at least 20 times?"

Severus was growing increasingly anxious. His breathing was quickening and he couldn't help his brain from racing to conclusions.

" how would you know? Ive only just met you like 2 months ago. I doubt you know everything that has happened to my life." Severus snapped.

Why was lucius acting like this? It was like he was hell bent of ruining james and his relationship.

" look i know you. Ive known you since highschool-"

" no lucius. No you dont. You knew me in highschool and beginning of college then you knew me 2 months ago. You dont know what happened to me or how I've grown in the 15 year break you took from our friendship, so stay out of my marriage and focus on yours." Severus threw his lab coat off and grabbed his jacket and phone, swinging the door open and leaving.

" severus!" Lucius yelled behind him.

Severus ignored it and fled, telling another coworker he was gonna leave early today.

He just needed answers.

He needed answers, right. So thats why he was standing outside of James' office with take out in his hands.

He had gone home after getting food and saw that james wasnt there, which seemed to be the norm these days. Still didn't stop the disappointment.

So now there he was, walking through his office and spotted the assistants desk to find....a man?

" uh hello." Severus said tentatively.

The man, probably fresh out of college looked up and immediately stood up.

" oh hello! My name is George, im Mr.Potters new assistant. You must be his husband yes?" He said quickly.

Severus forced a smile and nodded.

" uh yeah. Im severus. Nice to meet you. Where is kendra?" Severus asked.

" oh you didn't hear? Ms. Jenkins was let go a couple weeks ago. Maybe a month?"

A month?

" hm thats strange. James didn't tell me."

"oh im sure he just forgot. He wasn't too fond of Kendra anyway. Um are you here to see him?" George asked.

"oh yeah. Um he wasnt home so i brought him dinner. Is he in there?" Severus pointed to his room door.

"yeah he is. Actually i was just about to head out but he said he was gonna stay late." George responded.

Severus looked down and realized he was holding his work bag and immediately apologized.

"oh im sorry I must've taken your time."

"no no! Its alright! Ive actually wanted to meet you but it looks like you dont come to the office often." George laughed.

Severus chuckled and nodded.

George said goodbye before waving and leaving, severus saying bye with a small smile.

He liked him. He was nice.

Severus sighed and walked to james' door, knocking on it lightly.

"come in." Was the response.

Severus took a moment to compose himself before opening the door and peeking his head through.

"hello." He said softly.

James looked up from his paperwork and his expression changed to surprise.

He stood up and walked around the table.

"sev. Sorry, i wasn't expecting you. What are you doing here?" He walked to him.

Severus held up the food and smiled nervously.

"I thought id bring dinner. I was worried you forgot to eat."

James smiled and shoved his hands in his pocket.

He laughed nervously, an indicator saying he probably did forget to eat.

"here ill set it down." Severus walked to his desk and set the food down, taking it out of its bag.

"uh actually i have a lot of work to do. And um ive got to go downstairs to get something so in afraid i cant eat with you."

"james. You've been overworking yourself. At least rest and eat a meal with me." Severus turned around and gave him a pointed look.

"im sorry i just cant. I think you should go home. Ill take a while."

"James-"

"im sorry. Im busy." James said.

Severus felt his heart drop. It was the same thing he said when he refused to spend time with him the first time. Only Severus wasn't going to let it go.

When James turned around to leave that's when Severus decided he absolutely couldn't wait any longer.

"are you cheating on me?" The words left like poison.

James turned back with raised eyebrows and wide eyes.

"what?"

"are you cheating on me again? Why do you keep avoiding me."

James didn't know what to say. He wasn't expecting a confrontation and there wasn't even anything to confront.

"so you are." Severus looked down. He didn't know what he was expecting. He was just hoping that wasn't the case.

"what? No! No, I'm not, I swear. I've just been busy, you know that."

"then I don't get it! If you aren't seeing someone else then what are you doing?"

"I've just been busy with work!"

"bullshit." Severus stepped closer.

Anger was rising in him and he didn't know what else to do.

"I know you have about a 100 employees that could take care of your work in a fraction of the time, hell even Sirius Black could help you but why are you so insistent on doing it all by yourself? Why are you so keen on spending the least amount of time with me as you can?!" Severus felt tears well up in his eyes and the surprised look on James' face wasn't helping.

"god you're driving me crazy. Is this all some kind of sick joke? Were you buttering me up so that when you leave I wouldn't be mad?"

"leave you? Sev, I would never leave you." James stepped closer.

"then what the hell are you doing?! What are WE doing?" Severus gestured to them both.

Severus turned around and paced the room, it felt like his world was turning.

"I don't understand. You do all these sweet things. You take me out, hug me, kiss me. You get me a cat, you bring me food, you even listen to my work even though you don't understand squat!" Severus exasperated.

"so why did you get me used to these things, make me believe you actually loved me and then all of a sudden treat me like I don't exist?!" Severus yelled.

Tears were falling down his face and he felt his chest tighten.

"I do love you!" James yelled back, reaching for Severus with half a mind thinking that Severus was gonna retract back but he didn't.

Instead he just allowed james to engulf him in a hug, let himself rest his head against his shoulder and be comforted.

" fuck i dont like this feeling..." severus whispered.

James didn't have the words or the will to speak. He allowed severus to talk, after all hes done to him he thought it was the least he could do.

" i feel like someone is ripping open my heart. It feels like you hate me, it feels like.....your replacing her." Severus sobbed.

He hugged james by the waist, digging his face deeper into james' neck.

James heart skipped a beat. The words lucius said to him repeated in his head about a million times over.

He'll never love you like he loved her.

The words he had repeated to himself like a mantra in the last couple of days felt like it dissipated when severus said that.

" everyday....its like i fall in love with you but each time i do you get more distant." Severus said softly.

He had stopped crying but didn't let go on his grip on james, nor did he pull his face away from where it was firmly planted.

" i love you.....but i hate feeling like you're replacing her."

James wanted to do everything to make it better, to make it stop for him.

But there was nothing he could do.

" lily....right?"

Severus looked up at him, remnants of his tears still in his eyes.

" what?"

James gulped. He at least deserved to know why he was so busy.

" lucius said something to me. About her and i just....I couldn't get it out of my head so i researched her yesterday."

Severus pulled away quickly, eyes wide and steps hesitant.

" what?"

" lily Evans. Thats her right? you're first love?"

" how do you know that?"

" i called your mom."

" you called my mother?!"

" yes....." james said quietly.

Severus' mouth open and shut multiple times.

" i- why- what in gods name did lucius tell you that would make you call my mother just to find out about lily?!" Severus yelled in disbelief.

James looked around. It was useless, he knows. He just wanted some time to think.

He really wanted to tell him all the crap lucius had told him that one night but then again he didn't want to risk severus and lucius' friendship, no matter how much he disliked it.

" he.....told me you dont love me. And that it was all a show." James said slowly.

He didn't know if he made the right choice, and severus' blank expression wasnt helping.

" excuse me?" Severus finally said after a minute of silence.

James sighed and ran his hand down his face.

" he told me you were just using me. And that you didn't actually love me, just that you were gonna throw me away when you were done like you did to him." James looked down.

He didn't want to see severus' face, whatever it may reveal.

" and what does lily have to do with any of it?" Severus asked.

James was a little disappointed. It was not the response he was expecting or had wished for but it was a response nonetheless.

" he said you would never love me like you loved her. You would never love anyone like you loved her." James emphasized the word anyone.

Severus looked at james, his confusion deepening with every word he was saying.

Why would lucius tell him that? Why would lucius bring lily into it like that?

" he's right." Severus said with a firm voice.

The confidence in the statement made james' stomach churn. He closed his eyes and turned around, covering his face as he felt the overwhelming hurt wash over him.

" ill never love anyone like i loved her, but it doesn't take anything away from how much i love you." Severus reached for his shoulder.

He hugged him from behind, like james had done to him so many times.

James tensed, his shoulders tightening in defense to the action.

" i love you James. And im sorry if you feel that i dont. And its true, ill never love anyone like i loved lily but no body will every love anyone like i loved lily. I knew her for 13 years, dated her for 3 and was in love with her for god knows how long. She was my best friend and the love of my life." Severus said softly.

James didn't understand how this would make him feel better but he just listened. Its what severus and frankly lily deserved.

Severus turned james around, hiding the gasp when he saw the tears rolling off james' cheeks.

It was the first time he had ever seen James cry.

He turned him around so that their foreheads touched and Severus held him closer, almost protectively.

"but you're my husband. I'll love you unconditionally. And I made a vow to you, even if it was arranged for me to do so." Severus kissed his forehead like he did when James was asleep.

The gesture spread warmth in James' chest. It eased the pain, but it was still there.

"She's gone. Don't compare yourself to her. I love you now, and I loved her then."

Severus cupped James' jaw. He didn't come into this thinking he would end up comforting James, but he knew he needed it more.

"I love you." Severus whispered before pulling his face in and connecting their lips.

James' tears were cold against his face. They both closed their eyes, James' arms coming up to hold onto Severus' shirt.

It was longer than the small goodbye kisses or the end of the night kisses James insisted be planted on his face after a date. No, it was long and full of love, one that Severus had been suppressing for as long as he had met James.

Because no matter how they met, how they got married or whether it was arranged or not, Severus always had a choice in who he would marry.

His parents weren't monsters, no matter how much of a scum his father was he still had freedom to choose who he would marry.

And he had chosen James.

From the moment he saw his picture, to the moment they got married, he knew it wouldn't be long until he was absolutely head over heels in love with James bloody Potter.

Because it was part of his charm, and Severus just hoped there would be a day when James loved him back.

And he finally got it. After 2 years of silently suppressing the longing in his chest, and about a year of being oblivious to James' infatuation, they were finally on the same page.

Severus pulled back, hands still on either side of James' jaw, thumb caressing his cheek lovingly.

"You really do love me?" James asked.

Severus smiled and nodded.

"I do."

James smiled back and chuckled.

"About time."

Severus laughed and slapped his shoulder.

"Hey! Do not rush love."

" still. Could've at least kissed me back sooner."

" i gave you your goodnight kisses didn't i?"

" those arent real kisses, not like this one."

Before severus could ask what he meant, he was already being pulled in by the neck for another searing kiss.

Severus melted into it, hand riding up to run its fingers through james' hair.

James kissed him passionately, like he did most things.

But he felt the love behind the action with how gentle he was being.

Severus smiled into it, giving him one last peck before pulling away completely.

" happy now?" Severus panted. James was also panting, chest heaving up and down.

" very." He smiled wide.

Severus snorted a laugh and pulled out of his arms.

" come on. Lets eat."

Chapter 9

It's been a week since that night. Since Severus finally professed his love for James and accepted that it was ok to love again.

And it felt right that he was doing this. Letting Lily go after so long.

He had graduated college, gotten a masters, even a Ph.D after her death and was now married to a man he loved.

So when the anniversary of Lily's death drew closer as snow fell from the sky, he needed to pay a visit to an old friend.

"hello lils." Severus said softly.

The cemetery was cold, probably from the fresh November snow that covered every tombstone.

Severus dusted off the white pillowy substance to reveal the clean grey granite that had "Lily J. Evans." engraved into the stone.

He smiled fondly at her tombstone. He missed her terribly, missed his best friend but he was finally ready to move on.

But of course as best friends do, he had a need to tell her about James.

"I'm finally moving on. I finally found someone else I love." Severus pat the top of the headstone lovingly.

"his name is James. I know, it's a guy. Shocking." He snickered to himself.

"I think you would've liked him. He would have annoyed you to death but I think you would have gotten along nicely."

Severus sighed, watching the sky and narrowing his eyes when the sun hit his face.

"but I love him. No matter how much of a right bastard he can be. I just can't seem to shake off the feeling of infatuation I have with him. Oh and I'm married to him. Forgot about that." Severus added quickly.

He liked to talk about what's been going on when he visited Lily, but in the past few years he hasn't had the time or will to visit her grave.

It felt like every time he did it chained him back to her even further.

So he tried to avoid the hurt, but there was no use now.

"I hope you're happy Lily. I think I finally am." Severus set the white roses he was carrying on the ground next to the headstone.

He debated getting lilies, but Lily herself hated them. Always complained how everyone assumed her favorite flowers were lilies just because of her name.

So he opted out of them and got white roses instead, same color just not the same flower.

After he set them down he gave the tombstone one last pat before letting out a long exhale and saying goodbye.

The sun was out as it was nearing noon. He had a lunch date with James to get to, and a cat waiting at home who was awfully needy about his cuddles.

"severus." The same voice called.

The same one severus had been pretending not to hear for the past week.

After hearing what lucius said to james, he had some reevaluating to do. Mainly about lucius and how he decided to cut him out of his life.

He wasn't helpful and honestly he was just causing him trouble.

So he decided he didn't want to involve himself with him anymore.

Which was precisely what he was doing now.

He was sitting at a table with Remus, Arthur and Regulus, a biologist he had befriended when he started working there but did not often talk to.

"severus." Lucius said more firmly this time.

"im sorry did any of you hear anything?" Severus held a hand up to his ear and knotted his eyebrows.

Remus and arthur shook their heads and Regulus pursed his lips not to laugh.

"do not try that game with me severus. You've been avoiding me." Lucius seethed.

Severus finally looked over to him and gave him the light of day.

"oh! I thought i heard a toxic narcissist. Hows your wife? She healed from her cold yet?" Severus said with a condescending smile.

Lucius looked less than amused.

"im sorry, did i do anything to you to prompt your childish behavior?" Lucius gestured.

"well I wouldn't calling me reacting to the fact that you almost ruined me and my husband's relationship childish behavior but you do you Malfoy." Severus raised his hands up.

"Malfoy?" Lucius questioned.

"well thats your name isnt it? Or oh im sorry how rude of me. Dr. Malfoy right?" Severus said sarcastically.

He wasnt about to let lucius ruin another day.

"ok i dont know why you're being a sarcastic little shit today but cut it out." Lucius was at his boiling point.

Severus just looked at him and scoffed. His joking facade was over and even though he had a smile

on his face, it wasn't a kind one.

"ok Malfoy. I'll cut it out. How about instead we talk about how you visited my home at 10 pm hm? Or how you told my husband I didn't love him which led to a very tiring session of yelling. Or how you decided to tell me I was hanging out with a bunch of loons?"

"excuse me?" Remus cut in, looking offended at what Lucius had apparently said about Severus' friends and such.

"loons?" Arthur questioned quietly to Regulus who just shrugged.

Lucius looked around and blinked a couple times, being thoroughly embarrassed.

He shook his head and puffed out his chest, leaning his head back.

"i-"

"I'm not finished yet." Severus brought up a finger and stood up.

"I am not your biggest fan right now and frankly I want nothing to do with you from now on Malfoy. So why don't you run along before I tell your poor wife how you've been butting into another man's marriage yeah?" Severus shooed him away.

Lucius scoffed and opened his mouth to say something.

"look Severus I don't know what's gone into you or what your lying husband said that made me the enemy, but you are making a big mistake."

"don't care. Just leave before I start getting mad." Severus sat back down.

Lucius bit the inside of his cheek but stood his ground.

"Severus-"

"It's Dr. Snape to you. Now leave." Severus said with a stern face.

Lucius looked at him, neither backing away until Lucius finally left with a huff.

Severus rolled his eyes and went back to the group he was sitting with, tired of the bullshit he had to deal with already.

"really! Loons?" Remus yelled.

He did not take insults lightly and honestly if Severus wasn't there he would have probably lost his shit already.

"ok calm down Moony."

"oh my god not with the Moony." Remus put his head in his hands.

The three others laughed at his suffering and snickered silently when Remus gave them all a death glare.

"hey I'm glad you got rid of him. He wasn't a good dude." Arthur patted his shoulder.

"thanks Arthur."

" of course. And im happy you and james worked it out." Arthur added.

Severus nodded as he went back to his conversation with regulus, something about egypt or whatever they were talking about.

" hey. You ok?" Remus asked when severus picked at his food.

It was an old habit. Like a lot of severus' old habits, it was one that just didn't seem to go away.

Severus looked up at remus and smiled.

" yeah. I really am."

Chapter 10

2 years later:

James paced the long hallway nervously.

Remus Lupin was there in the waiting room with him and his husband Sirius.

Since Remus and Severus were friends Sirius and James were forced to hang out with each other but turns out they had a remarkable amount in common.

Now Sirius was practically his best friend and was trying to calm him down as he bit the inside of his cheek.

" come on dude. Dont worry about it, he'll be here soon."

" really Sirius? Because today is a very special day and Severus is no where to be seen! Where could he be?!" James yelled.

Sirius rolled his eyes and chuckled at his frustrated demeanor which James did not find amusing.

" oh i dont know. Ask the rushing scientist bursting through the hospital doors right now." Remus gestured to the entrance.

And sure enough there was a tall figure dressed in all black running to where the three were sitting.

" im here im here. Did anything happen?" Severus asked while huffing.

" no but where were you? A funeral?" Sirius teased.

Severus rolled his eyes and made a mocking face. Severus and Sirius didn't always get along at times but they did it for their husbands.

" anyway, im here."

" yeah it would be nice since its the birth of our SON." James emphasized.

He was spiraling and Severus knew that.

He took off his coat to reveal he was wearing a black hoodie and black jeans, a little more casual than usual.

He set them on the bench next to Remus and took James by the head, hands on either side of his face.

" ok. Calm down. He'll be here soon enough. Just try not to freak out yeah?" Severus gave him a peck and a pat on the shoulder before running off.

" wha- where are you going?!" James yelled down the hall Severus was currently running down.

" ive got to be there! I promised her!" Severus ran and disappeared around the corner.

The woman who they were adopting from was an incredibly nice lady. She had green eyes and dark brown hair and she had made very good friends with Severus who had been obsessing over her

for the past 9 months.

But of course on the actual day of the birth he has to be 2 hours late and halfway into labor.

"oh my god." Realization set into James and he sat down, head in his hands and leg tapping up and down on the tiled floor.

"come on James. You're fine. She's fine and Sev is in there now so it should all be smooth sailing from now on."

"easy for you to say. You're not gonna be a father in about 30 minutes." James snapped.

Remus snorted and Sirius looked at him with a pointed look.

The next few moments were agonizingly too slow for James.

After they discussed what to do with their marriage they came to the conclusion that they both wanted children.

So they started the adoption process.

It had been an anxious 13 month process for James but somehow Severus powered through like it was nothing.

And he even got everything done on time. James barely had to do anything but not be rude to the pregnant lady and try not to piss off Severus every single day.

He had the nursery ready at home, the baby supplies, the formula and even the nanny ready to work by Monday.

James was truly grateful he had Severus in his life and that he was doing this with him but the man surpassed his expectations on absolutely any level of life.

Marriage, work, fatherhood. Hell even cooking James found out after that one night their chef got sick and they were too hungry to wait for take out.

Turns out he can make a mean stack of pancakes. Even if it was for dinner.

But now he was in there, ready to comfort the woman who was giving birth to their child and there James was, freaking out over being a father.

But eventually every doubt and thought came to a screeching halt when Severus came out panting and a huge smile on his face.

"He's here. The baby is here." He said with possibly the biggest smile James has ever seen.

Nobody had a second to think before Severus was grabbing James by the arm and pulling him down the hall to where their baby was apparently waiting.

"wait Sev slow down!"

"I can't. Oh you've got to see him James he looks just like you. Only he has green eyes and he is the most beautiful thing in the whole world." Severus cooed.

James laughed as he allowed his husband to drag him down to the delivery room. He knew it wasn't biologically possible but it was cute how excited Severus was.

When they entered the room, the doctors were just finishing up and getting ready to take her to her private room, the baby safely in her arms.

" oh hello james." She said softly.

James greeted her back and placed his attention to the little bundle in her arms.

She passed the baby to severus and smiled as the couple saw their baby for the first time. Well james seeing his baby for the first time.

" ok we're going to take her to her room for rest now." The doctor informed.

James and severus nodded, stepping back as she said goodbye and was wheeled away to her room.

They had payed for a private room for her. It was the least they could do. She did give them her baby.

Speaking of which, severus could not get over his son.

He had shaggy black hair, a little thinner than james' but he was a baby, what did you expect.

He had big green doe eyes and tan skin like his father. It baffled him how alike he looked to james, even though he didn't share a single strand of DNA.

He was precious.

" james. Meet your son, Harry James Potter." Severus handed harry to james who took him gratefully.

He held him in his arms and he bit his bottom lip to stop himself from screaming. He felt like he was about to burst from happiness and james couldnt help but want to cry.

" Harry James? A bit narcissistic no?" James said.

Severus snorted and rolled his eyes.

" then what do you suggest his middle name be?"

" why does he even need one? You dont have one."

" well yes but it just seems right." Severus shrugged.

James laughed and looked down at harry who was going in and out of sleep, the act of being born apparently was very tiring.

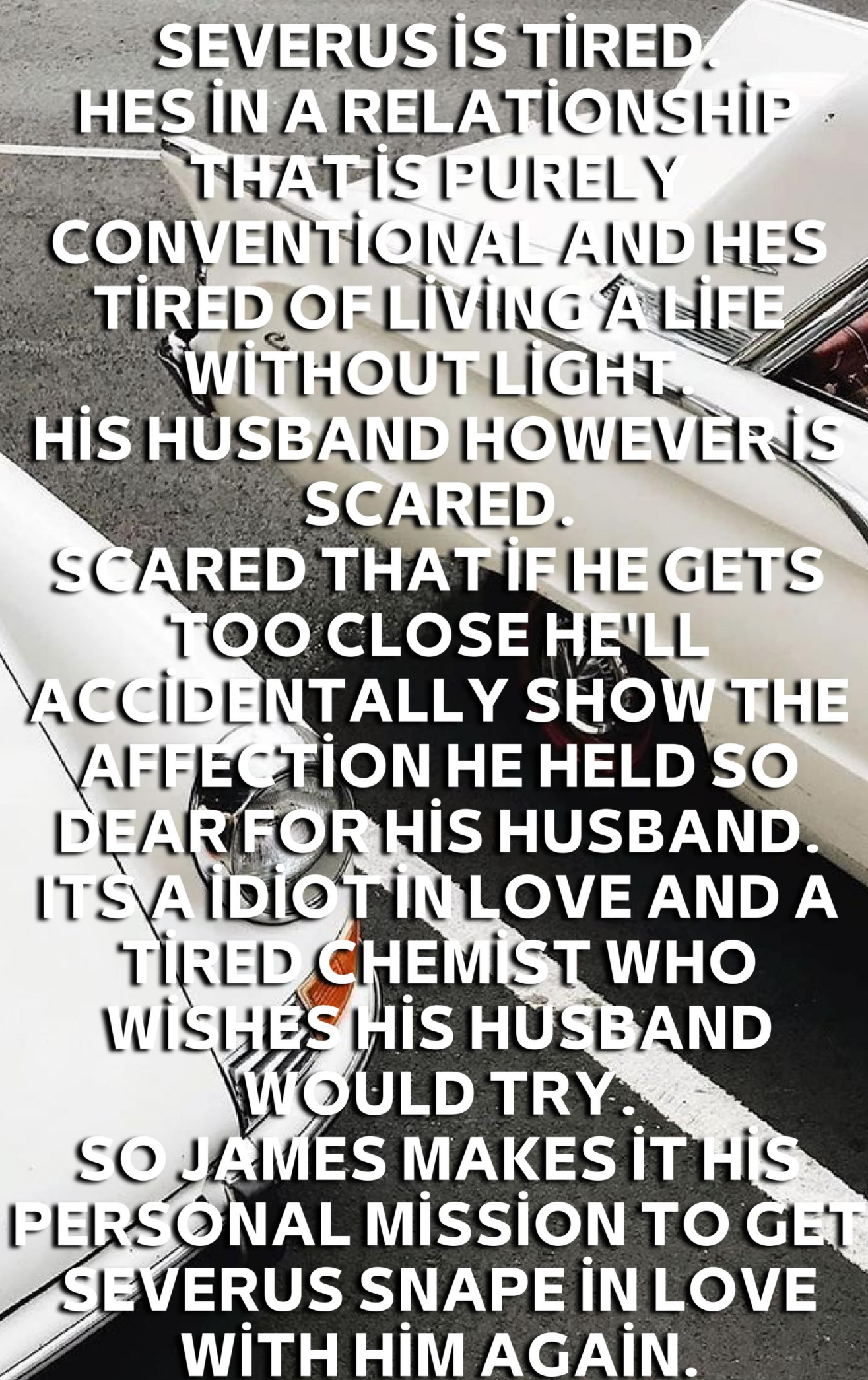
" how about Evan?"

" evan?"

" yeah. Like lily evans." James turned to severus with a soft smile.

Severus looked touched, a small smile on his face as he put a hand to his shoulder and leaned in behind him to see harry.

" yeah.... i love it. Harry Evan Potter."



**SEVERUS IS TIRED.
HES IN A RELATIONSHIP
THAT IS PURELY
CONVENTIONAL AND HES
TIRED OF LIVING A LIFE
WITHOUT LIGHT.
HIS HUSBAND HOWEVER IS
SCARED.
SCARED THAT IF HE GETS
TOO CLOSE HE'LL
ACCIDENTALLY SHOW THE
AFFECTION HE HELD SO
DEAR FOR HIS HUSBAND.
ITS A IDIOT IN LOVE AND A
TIRED CHEMIST WHO
WISHES HIS HUSBAND
WOULD TRY.
SO JAMES MAKES IT HIS
PERSONAL MISSION TO GET
SEVERUS SNAPE IN LOVE
WITH HIM AGAIN.**